

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 MMO-01 PER-01 ABF-01 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4593

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 ABU DHABI 1861

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, BEXP, TX

SUBJ: PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL ATTACHE, TECHNICAL SERVICES
POSITION IN GULF

REF: STATE 163344

1. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHICH WE CAN SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOP SPECIFIC TECHNICAL SERVICES PROJECTS IN UAE IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE, AND WHILE WE WOULD WISH TO SEE HOW WATER AUGMENTATION PROJECT WORKS OUT BEFORE MAKING FINAL ASSESSMENT AS TO HOW PROMISING THIS APPEARS TO BE AS AREA OF US-UAE COOPERATION, OUR PRESENT THINKING IS THAT UAE IS LIKELY TO BECOME GOOD MARKET FOR US TECHNICAL SERVICES IN FUTURE. WE BELIEVE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL ATTACHE IN GULF COULD BE DEFINITE ASSET IN STIMULATING UAE INTEREST IN AND APPETITE FOR US TECHNICAL EXPERTISE. THERE IS STILL MUCH SORTING OUT THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE WITHIN ABU DHABI GOVERNMENT IN TERMS OF PLANNING AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, AND CONFUSION THAT SURROUNDS EMIRATE/FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP WILL CONTINUE TO POSE PROBLEMS TO BOTH NEGOTIATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNICAL SERVICES PROJECTS IN NEAR-TERM FUTURE. HOWEVER, GOVERNMENT IS BEGINNING TO COME TO GRIPS WITH BOTH ASPECTS OF THIS PROBLEM AND OVER NEXT FEW YEARS
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WE CAN EXPECT AN IMPROVEMENT. COMING YEAR WOULD BE TIME FOR

REGIONAL ATTACHE TO BEGIN TO BUILD PERSONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN PLANNING DEPARTMENT AND MINISTRIES THAT COULD LATER PAY OFF IN DEVELOPMENT OF SOUND TECHNICAL SERVICES PROJECTS.

2. FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE KEYED TO LETTERED PARAGRAPHS REFTEL:

(A) LOCATION - KUWAIT OR MANAMA WOULD BE EQUALLY ACCEPTABLE FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW. EITHER WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO LOCATION IN ABU DHABI, WHERE HOUSING IS DIFFICULT PROBLEM, AND WHERE, FOR NEXT 2-3 YEARS AT LEAST UNTIL WE CAN MOVE TO NEW CHANCERY BUILDING, WE WILL HAVE ACUTE SHORTAGE OF OFFICE SPACE.

(B) OFFICER'S RANK WOULD NOT BE IMPORTANT FACTOR HERE. MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION, FROM POINT OF VIEW OF ADDING TO EMBASSY'S CAPABILITIES, IS THAT REGIONAL ATTACHE HAVE BACKGROUND IN VARIETY OF FIELDS, TECHNICAL SERVICES AS WELL AS GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF HOW TO GET THINGS DONE IN WASHINGTON. FSR-2 RANK SOUNDS APPROPRIATE TO US. OUR PRELIMINARY THINKING IS THAT SUCH OFFICER COULD BE LISTED AS "ATTACHE FOR DEVELOPMENT SERVICES" AND (ASSUMING HE HAS FSR-2 RANK) COME IMMEDIATELY AFTER DCM IN RANK ORDER ON DIPLOMATIC LIST. HE WOULD OF COURSE BE LISTED AS RESIDENT OUTSIDE UAE.

(C) WE BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM IN GETTING ACCREDITATION OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ATTACHE FROM UAEG.

(D) OUR ECON/COMMERCIAL SECTION WAS EXTREMELY BUSY IN 1975/76 SEASON AND WORKLOAD PROMISES TO BE EVEN GREATER IN 1976/77. ONCE ESTABLISHED, REGIONAL ATTACHE COULD PROVIDE VALUABLE COMPLEMENT TO WORK OF ECON/CML SECTION IN HELPING TO DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSULTANCIES FOR US FIRMS AS WELL AS IN AUGMENTING EMBASSY SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON MAJOR PROJECTS IN UAE. IN OTHER RESPECTS, HOWEVER, ASSIGNMENT OF ATTACHE IS LIKELY TO CUT INTO TIME WE CAN DEVOTE TO ECON/CML WORK. THIS HAS TWO ASPECTS. FIRST IS ASSISTANCE THAT WILL BE REQUIRED BY ATTACHE IN MAKING CONTACTS HERE AND LEARNING HOW TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY WITHIN CONFUSING UAE BUREAUCRACY. ALTHOUGH THIS WILL CUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTO TIME OF ONE OF OUR ECON/CML OFFICERS, WE ARE PREPARED TO MAKE FULL EFFORT TO HELP GET REGIONAL ATTACHE'S FEET ON GROUND, BUT AFTER THAT WE WOULD HOPE THAT HE COULD OPERATE IN SELF-SUFFICIENT MANNER AND NOT RELY HEAVILY ON SUPPORT FROM ECON/CML SECTION. SECOND, IF REGIONAL ATTACHE IS SUCCESSFUL AS WE HOPE IN DEVELOPING FURTHER PROJECTS, IT WILL BECOME TIME CONSUMING TASK FOR ONE OF OUR OFFICERS TO PURSUE THESE

DISCUSSIONS OR NEGOTIATIONS WHEN ATTACHE CANNOT BE IN TOWN HIMSELF. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH CUSTOMS AND WATER AUGMENTATION AGREEMENTS HAS SHOWN JUST HOW TIME-CONSUMING THESE PROJECTS CAN BE BEFORE THEY ARE FINALLY TIED DOWN. ASSUMING SPIRIT OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY ON PART OF REGIONAL ATTACHE, WE THINK SUPPORT REQUIRED IN NEXT YEAR OR TWO WILL BE MANAGEABLE WITHIN EMBASSY'S PRESENT PERSONNEL RESOURCES. IF A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL SERVICES PROJECTS DEVELOP IN COURSE OF TIME, WE WILL REQUIRE SUPPLEMENTING OF EMBASSY'S PERSONNEL RESOURCES TO HANDLE THIS EXTRA WORKLOAD ADEQUATELY.

(E) WE HAVE ALREADY ENCOUNTERED SOME SENSITIVITY FROM PRIVATE US FIRMS ABOUT COMPETITION FROM USG IN CONSULTANCIES. WHILE THIS ASPECT MUST BE HANDLED WITH SENSITIVITY ON INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS, WE DO NOT CONSIDER IT SUFFICIENT REASON TO CURTAIL OUR PUSH TO DEVELOP GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT COOPERATION IN TECHNICAL SERVICES. THERE ARE ALREADY SEVERAL US CONSULTANTS HERE (BECHTEL AND ARTHUR D. LITTLE ARE EXAMPLES) THAT HAVE ESTABLISHED EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH UAE AUTHORITIES AND UNDOUBTEDLY LATTER WILL CONTINUE TO GO DIRECTLY TO THESE FIRMS ON PROJECTS THAT FALL WITHIN THEIR COMPETENCE. OBVIOUSLY WHERE DEAL IS IN THE MAKING WITH PRIVATE US CONSULTANT WE SHOULD BACK OFF FROM PUSHING SERVICES ARRANGED UNDER US AUSPICES. HOWEVER, WHILE US CONSULTANTS ARE ALREADY WELL-ESTABLISHED IN UAE IN CERTAIN FIELDS, THEY ARE NOT IN OTHERS. BENEFIT WE STAND TO GAIN FROM ASSIGNMENT OF REGIONAL ATTACHE WILL BE ACQUAINTING UAE OFFICIALS WITH US TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES IN VARIETY OF FIELDS, AND ATTEMPTING TO GET THEM INTO HABIT OF SEEKING US CONSULTING FIRMS ON BROADER RANGE OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT PLANS. ASSUMING INDIVIDUAL CASES CAN BE HANDLED WITH TACT, WE BELIEVE MOST US CONSULTING FIRMS WILL SEE USG SERVICES IN TECHNICAL RESOURCES FIELD NOT AS COMPETITIVE BUT RATHER AS COMPLEMENTARY IN SENSE THAT OUR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OBJECTIVE IS TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BROADER RANGE OF AMERICAN TECHNICAL SERVICES, BULK OF WHICH OVER LONG RUN WILL HAVE TO BE PERFORMED BY PRIVATE FIRMS.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 MMO-01 PER-01 ABF-01 NSC-05

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(F) EMBASSY BELIEVES IT CAN COPE WITH BASIC ADMIN-
ISTRATIVE SUPPORT (TYPING, FINANCIAL SERVICES, OCCASIONAL
INTERPRETING) NEEDED BY ATTACHE. GREATER PROBLEM WILL
ARISE IF REGIONAL ATTACHE IS SUCCESSFUL IN DEVELOPING PRO-
JECTS AND EMBASSY IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE ADMINIS-
TRATIVE SUPPORT FOR NUMEROUS US EXPERTS WHO COME OUT TO IM-
PLEMENT THESE PROJECTS. THIS COULD BE MUCH GREATER BURDEN
THAN OUR PRESENT THIN ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF CAN HANDLE. IF
THERE TURNS OUT TO BE REAL BUSINESS ALONG THESE LINES IN UAE,
ADDITIONAL AMERICAN POSITION AND SUPPORTING FSL IN ADMINISTRATIVE
SECTION WILL BE REQUIRED.

LACK OF PHYSICAL SPACE IN EMBASSY'S PRESENT QUARTERS
PRESENTS IMMEDIATE PROBLEM IN TERMS OF GIVING REGIONAL ATTACHE,
WHEN HE IS IN TOWN, OFFICE TO HIMSELF, TELEPHONE, ETC. BY
DOUBLING UP PEOPLE WE HAVE WITH DIFFICULTY MADE ROOM FOR NEW
CONSUL EXPECTED IN FALL. WE WOULD HAVE TO WORK SOMETHING
OUT FOR REGIONAL ATTACHE BUT HE SHOULD BE FOREWARNED THAT IT
IS NOT LIKELY TO GIVE HIM ALL THE PRIVACY AND CONVENIENCE
THAT HE MIGHT WISH.

INTERPRETING SHOULD NOT BE MAJOR PROBLEM HERE. MOST OF
KEY PERSONNEL WHO ARE IN CHARGE OF PLANNING AND PROJECT IM-
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PLEMENTATION IN UAE SPEAK ENGLISH. ON OCCASION WHEN MEETING
IS REQUIRED WITH OFFICIAL WHO DOES NOT, GOVERNMENT INTER-
PRETER IS ALMOST ALWAYS READILY AVAILABLE.

(G) AS FAR AS OPPORTUNITIES IN UAE ARE CONCERNED, WE
BELIEVE SHORT PERIODS OF TDY COMING OUT OF WASHINGTON WOULD

SUFFICE FOR NEXT YEAR OR SO. IMPORTANT THING IN OUR VIEW IS NOT
TO START OUT WITH SOMEONE ON TDY BASIS AND THEN SWITCH TO SOME-
ONE ELSE AFTER YEAR OR SO. PERSONAL CONFIDENCE WHICH
ATTACHE WILL BUILD UP WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS THROUGH REPEATED
VISITS HERE OVER EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME WILL HAVE MUCH TO DO
WITH SUCCESS OF HIS MISSION IN UAE. FOR THIS REASON WE
HOPE ATTACHE ONCE SELECTED WOULD BE ABLE TO CARRY ON IN THIS
ROLE FOR PERIOD OF 3 YEARS AT LEAST.
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